

# WATER TALK

## PLAY YOUR PART AND HELP US STAVE OFF POSSIBLE DROUGHT



Lake? What lake? A bad memory of the 1990s at Blagdon.

**WE ALL LIKE nice, dry weather. But the last thing we want to see in our region is the kind of drought we saw back in the 1990s or mid 1970s. It's been 20 years since there was a hose ban in the Bristol Water area – and we want to keep it that way. And we can – provided you play your part and help us to preserve precious water supplies. Now.**

We are NOT short of water – but we need to keep summer demand under control if we are to avoid problems in the future.

Recent short-lived spells of rain have not boosted the reservoirs at all, just temporarily persuaded some gardeners not to bother watering.

The reservoirs are, in fact, dropping remorselessly. They never filled by the start of Spring and are now on average well under 80% full.

Why? Sheer lack of rain on the Mendip catchment area which feeds Chew and Blagdon Lakes. Just look at the March figure - 16.5 mm, or just 22% of the

average (in fact, it was the driest March for more than 50 years). April rainfall = 19 mm, or just 34% of the average.

Over the year to date, we have recorded 40% of the normal rainfall - below average for month after month after month. There were seven months of significantly below average rainfall locally.

The real issue for reservoir storage was annual rainfall for January to December 2010. This was exceptionally low, the third lowest in the last 100 years with only 1921 and 1933 being lower (and both of those were famous drought years).

### So, what have we done?

Well, we haven't just sat back and prayed for rain.

You see, we are not totally reliant on the Mendip reservoirs for our resources. Typically, around 50% of our supply comes from the reservoirs with the other 50% coming from a combination of the River Severn via the Sharpness Canal and groundwater sources, such as springs and boreholes.

Earlier last summer, as part of its strategy, the Company reduced the amount of water taken from the Mendip sources as much as practicable, replacing this with pumped transfers of River Severn water. We have repeated the exercise this year, too.

At the moment, thanks to the changes we have made, groundwater is contributing 15% of what we need; surface water (i.e. reservoirs), 19%; and the River Severn, 65%.

Without this action, Mendip reservoirs would be much lower and less able to help meet summer demand.

● **Get the latest on the situation by reading the regularly updated water resource briefings on our website – [www.bristolwater.co.uk](http://www.bristolwater.co.uk)**

## RECOGNISE IT?

**THAT'S ONE OF OUR LAKES IN A DROUGHT.**

Still think it's important to water your grass? To avoid a hose ban, use less water. Now.

For more information visit [www.bristolwater.co.uk](http://www.bristolwater.co.uk)

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## TOP TIPS TO AVOID WASTE OF WATER

### IN THE GARDEN:

- If showers are forecast, then don't waste time and precious resources by watering.
- Remember - much garden watering is completely unnecessary and can actually harm plants.
- If you really need to water, then do it in the early morning or late evening when evaporation is minimal.
- Don't cut lawns too short, as longer grass sends down deeper roots.

### IN THE HOME:

- Turn off the tap while brushing your teeth - a running tap wastes over 6 litres per minute.
- Fix drips: A dripping tap wastes at least 5,500 litres of water a year.
- Hand-washing dishes typically uses about 63 litres per session; if those dishes are rinsed off under a running tap the total water used averages 150 litres - in comparison, a modern dishwasher can use as little as 15 litres of water per cycle. But make sure you fill the dishwasher.
- A bath typically uses around 80 litres, while a short shower can use as little as a third of that amount.
- Use a shower timer to increase your awareness of the amount of time you spend in the shower.
- Before starting your washing machine, wait for a full load.
- For lots more information, see <http://www.waterwise.org.uk/>

## Aim to deal promptly and fairly with you

**“The Bristol Water Bond sets out the levels of service we aim to achieve. It is OUR commitment to serving YOU, our domestic customers.**

Our main objective is to provide you with a safe and reliable supply of water at all times. We are proud of our excellent record from over 160 years of experience. We operate an extensive network involving complex treatment processes and many support

services to bring water to your tap, safe to drink. All this is backed up by thorough planning and highly trained staff.

We aim at all times to give good service and deal promptly and fairly with you. We are required by Government to make certain undertakings of service to you. However, where possible, we go further.

We believe that Bristol Water has the trust of its customers and of the communities it

serves. We would never intentionally do anything to break that trust - it is our most valuable asset.

Our Bristol Water Bond commitments to you are set out here in clear and simple English. Please keep a copy in case you need to refer to them in future - although we hope the need never arises.”

**Luis Garcia, CEO,  
Bristol Water plc.**

### WATER QUALITY

1. We will supply you with water that is safe to drink, meeting the legal water quality standards. Protecting your health is of paramount importance to us. If there is ever a need to impose ‘boil water’ precautions, give ‘do not use’ advice or suspend supplies for water quality reasons, then we will do so and if the problem is our fault we will pay you £10 compensation.

2. Although we always try to resolve water quality enquiries immediately, we promise to phone you back within 4 hours during the normal working day with any additional water quality information you reasonably require. If your call relates to health concerns we will phone back within 4 hours regardless of the time or day. If we agree it would be helpful to sample your tap water, we will arrange a visit at a convenient time.

3. We will phone you with the results of a sample taken because of a health complaint no later than 2 working days after the results become available. Within 5 working days of all results being available, we will, if you request, confirm them to you in writing.

### WATER SUPPLY

4. We will give you notice of a planned cut off of your water supply and an expected restoration time. We will pay compensation if the cut off lasts more than 4 hours and we had not given you 48 hours prior written notice.\*

5. After planned maintenance work, we will restore supplies within the time specified in the warning notice.\*

6. We will restore supplies interrupted by an emergency within 48 hours of our becoming aware of a burst or a leak on a strategic main or within 12 hours in any other circumstance.\*

7. We aim to provide you with a good flow of water at your tap.\*

8. If you are the first person to report an unidentified leak from our pipes and we have not repaired it within 10 working days, we will pay you £30 (unless we have to give extended notice to the local Highway Authority or third parties).

9. We will usually repair, free of charge, a domestic customer’s external underground supply pipe (up to the external wall of the house) on the first occasion a leak is found.

10. We will give you leakage allowances if you are a domestic customer when a leak on your pipe causes your metered water use to be higher than normal. For the first leak we will allow you 100% of the higher consumption and for the second leak 50%. You must advise us of the problem and carry out repairs promptly. Allowances for business customers are different.

11. We will help you undertake a water usage audit if requested.

12. We will carry out a survey and fit a meter as quickly as possible (where it is feasible to fit one) and certainly within 45 working days of receiving your signed application form other than during promotional campaigns. This period is extended to 60 working days for applications received in the period March to June. If we do not install the meter by the end of the specified time period we will not charge for water services until the meter is fitted.

13. We will replace your meter within 20 working days of it being discovered to be faulty.

14. When we install or change your water meter we will provide written details including the date, the meter serial number and its reading.

15. If your supply is metered and we agree you need to run water to flush the supply, we will make an allowance of £5.

16. We will carry out a survey within 10 working days of your request for the relocation of a water meter. We charge for this service.

17. We will provide you with a connection to our mains within 10 working days of our final inspection and receipt of your connection charge (unless we have to give extended notice to the local Highway Authority or third parties).

18. If you have replaced your lead or galvanised iron supply pipe, we will replace ours and connect to your new one within 10 working days of our final inspection of your completed work and payment of charges (unless we have to give extended notice to the local Highway Authority or third parties).



# Our Commitment To You

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## CUSTOMER SERVICE

19. We will respond to your written complaint within 10 working days of receipt.\*
20. If we need to meet you or enter your home, we will offer you an appointment to visit either in the morning or afternoon or, if you request, within a 2 hour time band. Our representative will arrive within the agreed time period. We will give you at least 24 hours notice of the need to rearrange an appointment.\*
21. If you are registered for our Customer Care Plus scheme we will, if requested, send a bill or an item of literature in an agreed format e.g. Braille, large print or communicate with you in a specially requested way. We will process completed applications to join the scheme within 10 working days of receipt.
22. If your property is damaged or flooded because of a burst or leak from a water main, we will offer to clean up and arrange for our appointed loss adjuster to assess your needs and claim.
23. We will recompense you for clothes stained during washing if it is our fault.
24. Company employees and those working on behalf of the Company will treat you courteously.
25. If we fail to pay compensation due by certain deadlines, we will pay you additional compensation.\*

## The not so small print

**All documents contain small print - not to try to confuse you but because definitions, conditions and exclusions need to be spelt out in full detail.**

The Bristol Water Bond is no different. The information about the Bond printed on these pages is intended to serve simply as a general guide to the commitments we offer. It does not set out in full all our legal obligations to you, nor the circumstances when we will not provide compensation.

Putting it simply, our commitments do not apply if we are prevented from meeting our standards as a result of the actions of a third party or exceptional circumstances such as severe weather or industrial action.

Most of our customers are billed by Bristol Wessex Billing Services Ltd jointly for water supplied by Bristol Water and sewerage services handled by Wessex Water. If this is the case, you will receive only one payment per incident that relates to billing or payment matters.

In many matters, compensation is automatic - we will pay you without you having to make a claim at all. Where you need to make a claim for compensation, you must notify Bristol Water in writing as soon as possible and no later than three months after the incident.

Information about the level of compensation and whether you need to claim, plus terms and conditions are detailed in our booklet - Bristol Water Bond: Compensation Schemes. It is available from Citizens' Advice Bureaux, libraries and on our website [www.bristolwater.co.uk](http://www.bristolwater.co.uk) or you can ask for a copy by phoning 0845 702 3797 (Mon-Fri, 8am-6pm). Our other Codes of Practice are also available.

Much of the information provided on this page is directly aimed at domestic customers. We do have a separate Bristol Water Business Bond, published on our website or in a leaflet we can send you. This outlines our commitments on services to business customers. The Bristol Water Bond: Compensation Schemes booklet also details the compensation we offer business customers.

### Note 1

\*These commitments are required by law, all the others are our additional discretionary commitments.

## BILLING PAYMENTS

26. We will respond to your enquiry concerning the accuracy of a bill we have sent you within 5 working days of receipt or 10 working days if a site visit is required.\*
27. We will rebate an unmetered domestic charge after being notified that a property is unoccupied but furnished as a result of the householder going into hospital or residential care or living with a relative.
28. If you have given us 5 working days notice of when you are moving, we will send a final bill within 5 working days of you leaving.
29. We will issue a replacement bill within 10 working days of your request being received.
30. We will respond within 5 working days if you request a change in payment method that we cannot meet or accept.\*
31. If we take a direct debit payment in error, we will pay your costs and any related bank charges and will correct the error within one working day.
32. If you overpay us as a result of our error, we will repay you together with interest on the overpayment as soon as we are aware of the problem.
33. If you request a receipt for a payment we will send one within 5 working days.
34. If we refer your debt to a debt collection agency they will act properly in accordance with the Credit Industry Code of Practice.
35. If we incorrectly issue a county court claim against you for a debt for which you are not liable and for which you have previously informed us that you are not liable, we will correct the situation and withdraw the fees and costs from your account and give you £100.

## SO WHAT HAPPENS IF WE GET IT WRONG?

We believe our commitments reflect excellent service. They are highly challenging to achieve consistently and go well beyond the minimum legal requirements. Inevitably, though, there will be occasions when things do not go as well as we would like. We are only human, too.

There can be no absolute guarantee that we will always meet our objective of providing a safe and reliable supply at all times. We have significant back-up systems and plans designed to meet most circumstances. But we cannot guarantee to cover every possible situation. To do so would mean duplicating many of our systems - and increasing your bills very significantly. We have to strike an appropriate balance.

- If things go wrong, we will do our best to get things back to normal as quickly as possible.
- In addition, if it is our fault we will pay compensation. If the failure is covered by legislation (see Note 1 left), then we will pay you automatically if we can identify you have been affected. Otherwise you should make a claim. Unless shown differently, we pay £30. In each case the compensation will be at least at the level laid down by legislation. Usually it will be more.



# SAVE WATER **AND** SAVE MONEY!



## FREE Water Efficiency Pack

To order your free pack go to: [www.bristolwater.co.uk](http://www.bristolwater.co.uk)

Pack includes  
Shower Saver,  
Save-a-Flush cistern  
device, shower timer,  
tap inserts and self  
audit leaflet.

**BRISTOL WATER** is providing **FREE** water-efficiency equipment to our customers, which can help reduce the amount of hot and cold water you need to use. Even if you do not have a water meter, saving water can save a lot of money because every drop of hot water takes energy to heat, which increases your energy bills. The average household spends over **£200** a year\* on heating hot water, and reducing this can be a big help in these difficult financial times

If you are on a water meter, saving water makes even more sense because your water bill is lower when you use less water - it's that simple. If you use everything in the pack, the average metered property could save more than **£100** per year in water and energy

bills, which isn't a bad offer when you consider that you can get it for free.

It's not just about saving money, though. The water we all use comes from the natural environment and requires energy and raw materials to purify and to supply. This creates a "carbon footprint" for water supply, and the carbon footprint of water supply in the Bristol Water area last year was nearly 49,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>, or 0.1 tonnes per household. If the energy for hot water is included in this figure it rises to over half a tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> per household, so we can all do our bit by using water as efficiently as possible.

\*This information is provided by the Energy Saving Trust and could be even higher if you use an immersion heater

### USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

(Cut out and keep)

● If you have a water supply query, call 0845 702 3797 (Emergency service only between 6pm and 8am).  
Minicom 0800 917 0737.

● If you have a billing query call 0845 600 3600  
Lines open Mon - Fri  
8am - 6pm.

● Meter option leaflet...  
call 0845 601 5983  
(24 hours).

● Reporting leaks...  
call 0800 801 011 free at  
any time.

● Beware bogus callers:  
Genuine Bristol Water staff  
carry proper identity cards.  
If you have any doubts, call  
freephone 0800 373 501  
to check the identity of  
anybody claiming to be  
from us.

● If you would like to  
know more about how we  
can help customers with  
special needs, such as the  
elderly or disabled call  
Customer Care Plus on  
0845 600 3600 or  
Minicom 0845 605 6585.

● For general enquiries  
call Corporate Affairs on  
0117 953 6470.



**A Shower Saver**  
regulates the flow from your showerhead to reduce the water you need for a good shower.



**B Shower Timer**  
lets you see how long you're in the shower.



**C Save-a-flush**  
goes in the toilet cistern to reduce the amount of water with each flush.



**D Tap Inserts**  
special inserts which regulate the flow to reduce water wastage.

**E Water Audit Leaflet**  
to help you audit your own water usage and show you how to save water.



**SAVE WATER  
SAVE ENERGY  
SAVE MONEY**

**Save £100 p.a. with a FREE  
Water Efficiency Pack**

If you have a water meter you can save over £100 a year\* with our FREE water efficiency equipment – and even non-metered homes can save up to £30 a year\* thanks to the savings made on water heating.

To get your FREE products tick the box for the items you want and post this form back to us, or go to our website – [www.bristolwater.co.uk](http://www.bristolwater.co.uk) to place your order.

Everything comes with full instructions and is FREE. Allow 28 days for delivery.

Send your form to:

Freepost RSKY-CLCA-AAUU,  
Free Water Efficiency Pack,  
Bristol Water plc, P O Box 218,  
Bridgwater Road, Bristol BS99 7AU.

\*For full calculations visit [www.bristolwater.co.uk](http://www.bristolwater.co.uk) Shower Saver not suitable for electric showers or showers with multiple jets. Save-a-flush suitable for single flush toilets over 7.5 litres. Tap inserts suitable for taps with threaded inserts only. Offer subject to availability. One pack per household.

Tick as required (see above for details).

ALL  A  B  C  D  E

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Delivery Address \_\_\_\_\_

Post Code \_\_\_\_\_

Finally, we have been asked by the Government to provide the following information. It is for monitoring purposes only and will remain confidential. (Answers do not affect your eligibility for free water-saving kit). Please tick as appropriate.

Does anyone in the household claim income related benefits?

Is anyone in the household over 70 years old?

Neither

Closing date for offer 31 December 2011

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